

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16674

USDOC FOR BEWT/TDAD-VERZARIU

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: BEXP, UR

SUBJ: VISIT OF MOBIL OIL OFFICIAL

REF: A) STATE 211590; B) MOSCOW 14558

1. IN VIEW OF COMMERCIAL OFFICE, OCTOBER 19-26 VISIT TO MOSCOW OF MOBIL OIL OFFICIAL ROBERT VAKA WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL. COMMOFF WAS ABLE TO ARRANGE MEETINGS AT MOST OF ORGANIZATIONS LISTED REF A, ALTHOUGH AS PREDICTED REF B VAKA WAS GENERALLY RECEIVED AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN WE HAD REQUESTED. (LIST OF ALTERNATIVE SOVIET OFFICIALS FOR MEETINGS WITH VAKA MENTIONED PARA 2 REF A WAS RECEIVED BY EMBASSY OCTOBER 26, I.E. DAY OF VAKA'S DEPARTURE.)

2. IN REVIEWING RESULTS OF VISIT WITH COMMATT, VAKA NOTED CONTINUING SOVIET INTEREST IN GAINING ACCESS TO MOBIL'S TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES. THIS ATTITUDE CAME THROUGH MOST CLEARLY IN LENGTHY MEETING WITH V.N. SUSHKOV OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE, WHO MENTIONED NUMBER OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS IN WHICH SOVIETS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SECURING MOBIL'S PARTICIPATION. VAKA REPORTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE ENCOUNTERED SOME RESIDUAL RESENTMENT ON SOVIET SIDE OVER RATHER ABRUPT MANNER IN WHICH MOBIL TERMINATED DISCUSSIONS IN 1973 ON POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN SAKHALIN OFF-SHORE OIL PROJECT. HOWEVER, SOVIETS DID NOT ALLOW WOUNDED PRIDE TO OVERCOME THEIR SATISFACTION WITH FACT THAT ANOTHER ONE OF "SIX SISTERS"

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HAD SENT REPRESENTATIVE TO MOSCOW SEEKING WAYS TO EXPAND

DEALINGS WITH USSR.

3. VAKA VISIT ALSO PROVIDED COMMATT OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE SOVIET OIL TRADING OFFICIALS IN ACTION. CONTRAST WAS INTERESTING, RANGING FROM SOYUZNEFTEXPORT PRESIDENT MERKULOV, AN OLD-LINE FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIAL WHO ARRIVED AT VAKA'S DINNER PARTY DRUNK AND HAD TO BE CARRIED TO HIS CAR (ALONG WITH OFFICIAL OF MOBIL GMBH (AUSTRIA), TO NAFTA LTD.'S LONDON REPRESENTATIVE ARUTUNYAN, A SMOOTH OPERATOR WHO CLEARLY KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND THE INTERNATIONAL OIL BUSINESS.
STOESSEL

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